



# Source Water Protection for Real Estate Professionals

Clean and safe drinking water is a necessity for life. If we aren't careful, some of our activities can contaminate, and/or deplete our drinking water sources. To protect municipal drinking water sources, Ontario passed the *Clean Water Act* (the Act) in 2006. The Act identifies 19 areas and regions in Ontario that are required to create Source Protection Plans to protect municipal sources of drinking water from drinking water threats. The Quinte Source Protection Plan was developed by the Quinte Source Protection Committee, based on science and the input from stakeholders.

## Why is Source Water Protection Important?

- Protects public health.
- Avoids the cost needed to clean up contaminated water sources.
- Reduces the cost of water treatment.
- Eliminates the need to find new drinking water sources when existing ones become contaminated.
- Ensure a long-term adequate supply of clean water for economic growth.



## Why Should Real Estate Professionals Care About Drinking Water Source Protection?

Many potential home, farm, and business buyers are not aware of Source Water Protection measures near municipal drinking water systems. As a realtor, it is your duty to inform your buyers and sellers about the features of the property. You should include Source Water Protection information to buyers to ensure that they are aware of their responsibilities. Somethings that are important to mention to buyers include but are not limited to;

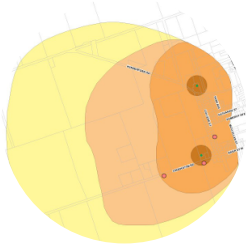
- Does the property have a Risk Management Plan?
- Is the property located within a vulnerable area?
- Are there activities that are prohibited on the potential property?
- Does the property have a private drinking water source (i.e. a well or surface water intake)?
- If the property has a well provide the buyers with information on how to protect their drinking water sources.

# Frequently Asked Questions

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## What are sources of drinking water?

- In the Quinte area, municipalities draw drinking water for municipal distribution and public use from groundwater wells (i.e. underground aquifers) and surface water intakes (i.e. lakes, rivers, streams).



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## What are vulnerable areas?

- Vulnerable areas surround municipal drinking water sources where certain activities can pose a threat to the water quality or quantity. These areas include Wellhead Protection Areas (WHPAs), Intake Protection Zones (IPZs), and Issues Contributing Areas (ICAs).

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## Where are vulnerable areas?

- Vulnerable areas are areas of land and water that may be vulnerable to contamination surrounding municipal water supplies (wells and intakes). The Quinte area has 11 municipal drinking water systems. There are four well systems in Deloro, Madoc, Tweed, Peats Point that have WHPAs, and seven intake systems in Ameliasburgh, Belleville, Deseronto, Greater Napanee, Picton, Point Anne, and Wellington with IPZs. Due to historical contamination issues, Madoc and Tweed have WHPA-ICAs to further protect their drinking water sources.



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## What does it mean if a property is in a vulnerable area?

- If a property is located in a vulnerable area (WHPA, IPZ, or ICA) it may be subjected to policies in the Quinte Source Protection Plan, and it may require a Risk Management Plan for the activities occurring on the property if they are a significant drinking water threat.

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## What is a significant drinking water threat?

- Significant drinking water threats are activities on the land and water that have the potential to impact municipal drinking water sources. Ontario has identified 22 prescribed drinking water threats under the *Clean Water Act, 2006*.



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## What types of activities are significant drinking water threats?

- The Quinte Source Protection Plan outlines voluntary and mandatory policies that address all drinking water threats in the area. Some policies require additional risk reduction measures and prohibition of certain activities. A few examples of activities that could pose a significant threat when undertaken close to a water source include;
  - Handling and storage of home heating oil, fuel (gasoline), road salts, manure, pesticides and fertilizers.
  - Operation of a septic system.
  - Application of pesticides, fertilizers, and road salt.
  - Pasturing and grazing.



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## What does it mean if a “threat” has been identified on the property that is for sale?

- It means that there is a potential threat to the safety of the municipal drinking water source and that policies in the Quinte Source Protection Plan may apply. The current owners should be aware of the threat and they should have a risk management plan. However, if they are uncertain, you can contact Quinte Conservation.

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## What do the new buyers have to do if there is a risk management plan in place with the previous owners?

- The new buyers should contact Quinte Conservation to see if they need to establish a new risk management plan. For example, if the new buyers intend on continuing the same activities as the previous owners (i.e. spreading fertilizers on a farm field), they may need a new risk management plan.



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## Where does the Quinte Source Protection Plan apply?

- The Quinte Source Protection Plan is based on Quinte Conservation’s jurisdiction boundaries. However, policies are only applicable in vulnerable areas around municipal drinking water systems. This means that the policies in the Plan apply to a relatively small and very specific areas in Ameliasburgh, Belleville, Deloro, Deseronto, Greater Napanee, Madoc, Peats Point, Picton, Point Anne, Tweed, and Wellington (less than one percent of the total Quinte area).



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### Is there potential for development or construction on properties in vulnerable areas?

- For some activities in specific vulnerable areas, applications under the *Planning Act*, or for the construction or the change of the use of a building, may not be made until a Risk Management Official issues a notice to the person who is proposing the regulated activity. The notice will identify if the activity:
  - is prohibited
  - that a Risk Management Plan has been agreed to or established for the activity or,
  - that neither prohibition nor risk management measures apply.
- If the activity is prohibited then the application cannot proceed. If the activity requires a Risk Management Plan, then the plan must be established before the application can proceed. If neither prohibition or risk management measures apply then the application may proceed.



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### Is the property in an area where septic system inspections are required every five years?

- The *Ontario Building Code* requires that septic systems in the most vulnerable areas surrounding municipal drinking water sources be inspected every five years. In the Quinte area these inspections are carried out by municipal staff in the applicable vulnerable areas surrounding the drinking water sources for Picton, Point Anne, Peats Point and the Villages of Deloro, Madoc, Tweed and Ameliasburgh.

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### What if I sell properties in different source protection areas?

- Not all Source Protection Plans are the same. If you have any questions about Source Water Protection measures for different locations, contact the local Conservation Authority to see if the property of interest is subjected to source protection policies.

